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CHAPTER NINE

CONTRACTING RIGHT OF WAY SERVICES

9-1 CONTRACTING RIGHT OF WAY SERVICES — GENERAL

9-1.01 Role of Contracted Services in Right of Way

The Department maintains a fully qualified and broadly experienced professional right of way staff consisting of personnel who deliver right of way for scheduled construction projects, and administer the Right of Way functions within the Department's Programs. The MaineDOT Right of Way staff is sized and positioned to accommodate normal project workload demands and acquisition complexity. Right of way services are contracted to private service providers to augment staff resources under the following circumstances:

1. Meet peak project workload requirements that cannot be met by MaineDOT staff.
2. Provide specialized expertise to address unique property acquisition situations.
3. Provide services on short notice to unexpected program needs.
4. Provide timely service in areas of the State that cannot be efficiently served by staff.
5. Meet temporary, urgent or occasional need that cannot be accommodated by MaineDOT staff.

9-1.02 Purpose of the Contracting Procedure

The purpose of the right of way contracting procedure is to set forth a consistent, equitable and effective process to assess contracting needs, evaluate qualifications, contract for services and provide guidance and oversight of service providers.

9-1.03 Legal Authority

This policy conforms to the following legal authorities:

1. 5 **MRSA**, Section 1816-A – Personal Service Contracting;
2. 5 **MRSA**, Section 1825-B – Bids, Awards and Contracts;
3. 49 **CFR** 18.36(a) – Procurement; and
4. 23 **CFR** Part 200 – Title VI Civil Rights Requirements.
5. 23 **CFR** Part 710 Right of Way and Environment.
6. 49 **CFR** Part 24 Uniform Act

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9-1.04 Scope of Right of Way Contract Services

Right of way services will normally be contracted on a project basis. However, specialized services may be required on an intermittent “stand-alone” basis as situations are identified that require services.

The following right of way functions may be contracted by the Department:

1. Preliminary ownership information;
2. Title investigation and certification;
3. Preliminary mapping;
4. Project data collection;
5. Right of way cost estimates;
6. Valuation services:
 - a. Appraisals
 - b. Supplemental Appraisal Services,
 - c. Dispute resolution counseling, and
 - d. Expert testimony;
7. Negotiation and acquisition services;
8. Relocation field services; and
9. Relocation assistance casework services.

The Department contracts regularly for appraisal services on a parcel or a project basis because this is a continuously recurring activity that is subject to wide workload fluctuations. The other functions will be contracted as a need is recognized, corresponding to the availability of MaineDOT right of way staff to perform work.

9-1.05 Civil Rights Assurance

The Department will insure compliance with Title VI of the ***Civil Rights Act of 1964***. This requires that no person shall, on the grounds of race, color or national origin, be excluded from participation in, or denied the benefits of, or otherwise be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity for which the recipient receives Federal assistance from the United States Department of Transportation.

The Department insures Title VI compliance in securing right of way services by advertising for contract services in media, including newspapers of general circulation that are available and used by minority populations in the area in which the services will be provided. The Department affirms that it does not discriminate in the right of way contract selection process or in the evaluation of contractor performance.

9-2 DEPARTMENTAL CONTRACTING PROVISIONS

9-2.01 Contract Procurement and Administration

Departmental contracting procedures for services have significantly changed since the previous version of this manual. The *Consultant Contracts & Audit Process Review (July 2005)* created the Contract Procurement Office (CPO) which was charged with creating and overseeing contract procedures in accordance with State and Federal regulations.

One major feature of CPO is the dedicated role of specific personnel across the agency whose primary responsibility is contract related issues. These Contract Specialists (CS) are assigned to major program areas such as the Property Office. Project Development also has other Contract Specialist dedicated to the needs of its other Offices and Programs.

These CS provide first line contracting guidance to the unit as well as coordination with the Contract Procurement Office on issues that need more clarity. Individuals within the Property Office in need of external services are to use their respective CS to ensure that all contract procurement and administration practices are in accordance with the Department's *Consultant Manual (December 2003)*. This also applies to right-of way personnel within the respective programs in need of services.

The appropriate CS will assist the sponsoring contract administrator in selecting the correct firm by the appropriate procurement method, using the correct contract type, and using the correct payment method.

9-3 CONTRACTING RIGHT OF WAY FUNCTIONS

Traditionally, MaineDOT had contracted primarily for appraisals. Department staff has performed other right of way functions. Over the last several years, MaineDOT has begun to contract for acquisition, relocation and property management services and anticipates contracting a broader range of right of way services that will include any or all of the functions listed in Section 9-1.04.

9-3.01 Qualifications

Thorough and relevant qualifications criteria are necessary to fairly assess contract providers of right of way services. The Department conducts a Statewide Request for Qualifications (RFQ) every two years in order to develop a short list of highly qualified firms. This short list is established to handle the Department's normal anticipated workload that may be assigned to private sector firms. In the event a need arises that falls outside that original solicitation the Department still has the ability to issue a project or task specific Request for Proposals (RFP).

Right of Way related General Consultant Agreements (GCAs) will be managed and administered by the Property Office. Program Senior Property Officers needing right of way services will coordinate contracts under these GCA's with their assigned Contract Specialists.

In either case a Qualifications Based Selection (QBS) is used. The following are examples of the relevant information needed to make a fair assessment of qualifications of a firm:

1. Experience. Discuss the firm's similar work. Only include information on those projects for the office that will perform the work by the staff assigned to these projects. No more than 3 single-sided pages for prime consultant.
2. Staff. Discuss the assignment of responsibility for various tasks to different units within the contractor's organization for the office that will perform the work by the staff assigned to these projects. No more than 2 single-sided pages.
3. Subcontractors. Discuss any work that would be subcontracted to associated firms. Include information concerning the percentage of work to be performed by each firm for the office that will perform the work. Discuss the qualifications and experience of those firms and include resumes for the key professionals assigned to these studies. *(Note: Projects included in resumes to exhibit relevant experience must include the following at a minimum: project description, actual or estimated completion date, and individual involvement.)* No more than 3 single-sided pages for authorized work discussion. No more than 1 single-sided page per resume.
4. Workload. Discuss the present and anticipated workload of the firm and major sub-consultants for the office that will perform the work by the staff assigned to these studies. No more than 1 single-sided page.

5. Project Right of Way Manager. Indicate who in the contractor's organization will be personally responsible or "in charge" of right of way and relocation components included in the scope of work. Discuss that person's qualifications, provide a resume, provide experience on similar projects, and discuss his or her present or anticipated workloads. (*Note: Projects included in resumes to exhibit relevant experience must include the following at a minimum: project description, actual or estimated completion date, and individual involvement.*) No more than 2 single-sided pages including resume.
6. Organization Chart. Provide an organizational chart showing the entire team. No more than 1 single-sided page.
7. Project Coordination. Discuss project coordination with MaineDOT. No more than 2 single-sided pages.
8. Form 254. Provide a completed Form 254 that is reflective of this type of work for the office that will perform the work by the staff assigned to these studies. No more than 3 single-sided pages.
9. Services. Identify those services from the following list that your firm has interest in providing (see Section 9-1.04).

The qualification packets submitted should conform to characteristics of the functions to be performed. Requests for qualification for specific functions (e.g., relocation, negotiation) may contain different factors.

9-3.02 Qualifications for Appraisers – Appraisal Register

The qualifications for Appraisers for valuation services that are contracted on a parcel or project basis are discussed in Chapter 4. This includes a description of the Appraisal Register, which is the list of consultant appraisers who are pre-qualified to work for MaineDOT. The process discussed in Chapter 4 will continue. Appraisers on the Appraisal Register will be advised if there is a need to update or augment their qualifications to meet the criteria discussed in this Chapter.

9-3.03 Right of Way Functions – Scope of Services

The qualifications packets submitted by service providers will address the scope of services for the specific functions to which the qualifications apply. The following sections discuss the scope of services for right of way functions.

9-3.03(a) Preliminary Mapping

Preliminary mapping includes the following activities:

1. Owner Data. Include the names and addresses of abutting property owners within the project limits. This data should be provided very early in the process to the Department prior to beginning the field survey. Provide the listing in a database format as a .dbf file and include the following fields for each parcel:
 - a. Owner's name(s),
 - b. Mailing address,
 - c. Tax map and lot number, and
 - d. Book and page reference for deed.
2. Maps. Include copies of full size tax map(s) encompassing the project area.
3. References. Include the reference materials used to develop the preliminary right of way plans (e.g., deeds, survey plans, town records).
4. Preliminary Plans. Prepare preliminary right of way plans in either a compatible computer format that is consistent with Department specifications or in a hard copy plot. For either format, the plans should include:
 - a. Include property lines plotted from deed, property owner information and existing plans correlated to the property markers as located in the field. This is intended to be an office plotting task to indicate property ownership limits and ownership and is not intended to involve property surveying of the parcels themselves. MaineDOT's concern and the consultant's focus should be on the location of the parcel frontage and sideline boundaries. The back line of lots should be shown where practical based on the size of the lot and availability of room on the plan sheet itself. These plans are not intended to be property surveys and will not require a Land Surveyor's stamp. Property lines reproduced directly from tax maps will not be accepted.
 - b. Include all existing easements and/or other property rights – located and identified.
 - c. Label each parcel depicted with property ownership information, including owner's name(s), parcel number and parcel total area.
 - d. Plat all parcel/property features (e.g., wells, septic systems, water lines, underground utilities).
 - e. For the existing centerline alignment, tie into any existing centerline alignments from previous projects, if there are any in the area. This information is available from the MaineDOT Mapping and Research Section.

- f. Note any references used (e.g., private surveys, DOT file number of plans, county layout).
- g. Identify the firm's name on every sheet with the following or similar note
"Apparent property lines and existing right of way determined and plotted by _____."

Note: The plotting of the property lines will be the sole responsibility of the consultant. The consultant agrees to perform all work arising out of this agreement in a reasonable and prudent manner and according to industry principles and practices. The consultant agrees to perform additional work as may be necessary to correct any negligence, errors or omissions in all work required under this agreement without undue delay and without additional cost to the Department. See Chapter 2 for additional detail.

9-3.03(b) Title Investigation and Certification

Title searches are prepared primarily to support the mapping function, but also to satisfy the legal requirements as mandated in 23 MRSA. Title searches are generally ordered after the Project Team establishes a conceptual project scope that includes the anticipated right of way acquisition needs. The following are the levels of searches that are requested by the surveyor/mapper of a project team based on the impacts to the property.

1. Preliminary Investigations. This level of title investigation is primarily in support of the preliminary mapping effort as described in Section 9-3.03(a). The principal deliverable work product is a compilation of copies of the current deed descriptions for all properties abutting the proposed project. These copies may be supplied to those individuals who are preparing the preliminary right of way maps at an early stage in the project development process to aid in the initial placement of property line data on the maps.
2. Deed Only Searches. This type of search is requested when the department anticipates that it will only need temporary property rights. A deed only search is a simple compilation of the current deed, a Grantor schedule only of the current owner from their acquisition forward and an abbreviated cover sheet.
3. Acquisition to Date Titles. All properties that will have permanent rights acquired as part of the project will have an acquisition to date title inspection prepared. The acquisition to date title includes:
 - a. A copy of the deed into the current owner;
 - b. A drawing or sketch of the property description as given in the deed;
 - c. A summary title which includes:

- 1) A complete schedule of all index entries for the current owner from the deed up to the date that the title investigations are begun (All titles for the project should be scheduled through the same date.);
- 2) An abstract of all instruments in the chain of title from the current owner forward (The instruments should be copied, not abstracted, when there is a change of description or other pertinent new material is given.);
- 3) A summary chain of title showing all instruments of record resulting from the schedule of index entries and;
- 4) A cover sheet showing the owner or record and other information as indicated on the form;
- d. A project inventory listing all owners of record by parcel number; and
- e. A listing of any problems that need to be resolved by parcel number together with a report on any measures to cure or additional information gathered by the abstractor.

Finally, the abstractor must be prepared to do any additional preliminary title work that is required for the mapper to complete plotting the property lines.

4. Full 40-Year Titles. Following establishment of the final project scope, but before development of final right of way plans, the Title Reports for all proposed fee acquisitions and acquisitions involving significant areas of previously claimed prescriptive easement right of way (AKA "wrought portion") will be upgraded to full 40-year Title Reports in compliance with Maine Bar Association standards. The findings of these Title Reports will be incorporated in the final right of way maps as the basis for the final phases of property valuation and acquisition activities.

At the completion of valuation and negotiation activities, but before actual acquisition, either by document or by eminent domain, all project titles will be updated and a memo will be submitted noting any ownership or mapping changes.

Three weeks prior to any scheduled acquisition, the Title Office will request checks according to the Report at the approved compensation levels, prepare appropriate acquisition documents (either a deed or a notice of taking), arrange for filing of the necessary record documents, and distribute the payments and required landowner notices.

5. Certification of Titles. The final phase in the acquisition process is the recording of the acquisition documents. The Title Consultant will be responsible for coordinating the recording of these documents, conducting final title verification immediately prior to recording, and providing the Department with an attorney's certification that the Department has good and sufficient title for this action. The title certification will be the Department's primary documentation supporting execution of a Right of Way

Certificate by the Department's Program Manager certifying that the Department has the necessary rights to construct the project as designed and that all applicable Federal and State requirements governing the acquisition have been complied with.

See Chapter 2 for additional details.

9-3.03(c) Project Data Book

The Project Data Book is a cumulative collection of factual data that are gathered in support of the preparation of project right of way cost estimates, Administrative Acquisition Worksheets and appraisals for a project. The Project Data Book consolidates general data for a related group of individual parcel reports in order to prevent duplicating items such as comparable data sheets, studies, and general conclusions that relate to the area or region (e.g., time, utility, and location), area and neighborhood descriptions, general exhibits, trend studies, etc. On large projects, the intent of the Project Data Book is to promote project consistency and efficiency. The Project Data Book is limited to factual data. Analysis should be included in individual Parcel Reports. It is intended to become an integral part of each Parcel Report by reference.

The Project Data Book content is intended to reflect the scope and complexity of the project it represents. The following summary of procedures and content is intended to outline the required level of effort for a complex project of significant scope. The content of the data package for non-complex projects may be modified appropriately to suit the intended need for these data in relation to the actual project under development. The scope and content of the Project Data Book are to be mutually agreed on by the consultant and the Contract Administrator as a part of the scope of work for any specific project agreement.

Data collection must continue through submission of the last appraisal on the project. If the data, market, trends or references change during an appraisal project, appropriate additions to and modification of the completed Project Data Book must be made (e.g., Page 12- Revised June 13, 2000).

Include the following information elements in the Project Data Book:

1. Title Page. The Title Page should:
 - a. Include the project location by municipality, project number and PIN.
 - b. Identify MaineDOT as the client.
 - c. Give the name and address of the individual(s) making the Project Data Book.
 - d. Note the effective date of the Project Data Book.
2. Table of Contents. List the major parts of the report and subheadings.
3. Qualifications. Provide the qualifications of all persons providing significant contributions in preparing the Project Data Book.

4. Assumptions and Limiting Conditions. Assume that the project will be constructed according to the current design plan, unless there is information to the contrary, which must be cited by source and in specific detail. State any assumptions that are applicable to the research and assembly of the Project Data Book. Include any special instructions or directions furnished by MaineDOT.
5. References. Include data sources such as specific records and names and titles of individuals (e.g., municipal officials, contractors and real estate professionals providing information).
6. Description of the Project, Maps, Aerial Photographs, etc. Concisely describe the transportation project improvements and any changes in access, frontage, elevation, drainage, utilities, proximity, etc. Include a project location map within the municipality or area. All maps are to include a north arrow and identification of the project and municipality. All maps and plans may be bound as facing pages opposite the description, tabulation or discussion they concern.
7. Area and Neighborhood Analysis. Present a narrative discussion and analysis of the following:
 - a. Define and delineate the market area.
 - b. Identify and analyze the current supply and demand conditions that describe the specific real estate market.
 - c. Describe the existing supply of property for the specific uses within the defined market area affected by the project.
 - d. Describe historic uses, parcels or sites and the project's effect on the same.
 - e. Discuss current patterns of land use and trends in the area first and the neighborhood second (e.g., new construction planned or underway, vacant sites as potential competition for the subject(s), adequacy and availability of utilities, access, impaired sites nearby).
 - f. Discuss current economic factors affecting the area and neighborhood (e.g., population, employment, income characteristics, interest rates, rents, zoning, and other regulations). Discuss the probability of future changes for these factors, as relevant.
 - g. Provide a description of the neighborhood both before and after completion of the transportation project, as proposed.
 - h. Forecast how anticipated changes in the inventory of real property affected by the project will affect the subject neighborhood.

- i. Attach and provide a brief evaluation of any published economic, damage, cost, or other general studies that will be used in any valuations.
8. Market Data. State the extent of the process of collecting, confirming and reporting data. The statement of scope does not need to be lengthy. If the property is improved and land-only valuations are required, include a statement limiting the scope. If before and after appraisal(s) are anticipated, the data collection process must include sufficient comparable sales of the before property and comparable sales of the after property.

The market data, comparative or direct sales comparison approach is the most easily understood method for the presentation of market value and just compensation. Most often, greater reliance will be placed on this approach than all others. This is the only approach required for most parcels. Consequently, it is imperative that a sufficient amount of highly comparable market data be included for analysis in order to provide a sound basis for the conclusions drawn from the direct sales comparison approach.

Current, accurate comparable sales information is essential in sufficient quality and quantity to demonstrate that the valuation conclusions are representative of the local market. Data must provide a sound basis for valuation of both the before parcel and, in the case of a partial acquisition, the after acquisition condition of the remainder. Three comparable sales are generally considered the minimum acceptable support for simple valuations; more are recommended when available, especially for complex appraisal problems. The Marketing Data should include the following:

- a. Neighborhood Sales. Include an analysis of all recent sales of similar properties in the subject neighborhood. Discuss and analyze the existing supply of available similar properties (the competition). If pertinent, discuss the sales history of relevant comparables: time on the market, changes in the asking price, resale of the same property and sales agreements that fell through.
- b. Value Indicators. The following indicators of value may be included in the Project Data Book for the purpose of illustrating trends or extremes but may not be used as the only basis for value:
 - 1) Unconfirmed sales,
 - 2) Listings,
 - 3) Earnest money agreements,
 - 4) Offers to purchase,
 - 5) Lease or purchase options,
 - 6) Sales to or from agencies or utilities with the power of eminent domain,
 - 7) Estate sales between relatives,

- 8) Trades and/or exchanges,
- 9) Sales with generous financing terms,
- 10) Foreclosure sales,
- 11) Sales made under duress,
- 12) Bankruptcy estate sales, and/or
- 13) Auctions.

Any deviation from the foregoing is unacceptable except in rare cases where no other data exists and the Appraiser submits the documents, verification and analysis of date to the Right of Way Support Manager for approval for use in an Appraisal Report. Sufficient market data are not always available to evaluate all properties subject to the particular type of acquisition. When market data are limited, or weak in comparability, the Appraiser must demonstrate a legitimate, concerted effort to obtain other types of supporting data.

- c. **Inspection of Sales.** Inspection of all sales included in the data package is essential. If a timely field inspection is not practical due to weather or other factors, additional documentation demonstrating familiarity with the sales (dates of earlier inspections) must be included. Inspect the sales at the earliest opportunity. Only under extreme and unusual circumstances may a waiver be granted for the inspection of sales. The waiver should be in writing and should be fully explained and supported.
- d. **Confirmation of Sales.** An Appraiser is responsible for inspecting and personally confirming all market data used for Appraisal Reports. Actual open market sales are considered most reliable when the Appraiser verifies the facts with both buyers and sellers and, in some cases, with agents to the transaction through direct contact. Not every sale can be confirmed by personal contact with the buyer and the seller. In these instances, the Appraiser should verify the sale with the agent, if one was involved or other source of reliable information, and state the conditions and source of verification in the comparable data sheet.
- e. **Date of Sale.** The date of the meeting of the minds or the earnest money agreement date should be used as the date of sale if possible. Otherwise, use the date the deed of transfer was signed, not the date of recording, as the date of sale.
- f. **Use of Data Gathered by Others.** Market data on file with MaineDOT may be shared on request, with no obligation on the part of MaineDOT for its accuracy and relevance. Any staff or contract valuation professional who receives market data from MaineDOT is responsible for verifying, confirming, inspecting and conducting further independent research of this data.

- g. Comparable Market Data Sheets. Include a comparable market data sheet (Sale Sheet) for every sale or value indicator. Use of the MaineDOT form is not mandatory, but all pertinent data shown on the form must be included in each market data submittal. Descriptions must be clear enough to locate each sale in the field.

Estimate the land/improvement allocation on each improved property. The basis for the allocation (i.e., supporting data, reasoning, and correlation) must be provided. A statement that the purchaser or seller allocated the values or that it came from another appraisal is unacceptable without further support.

- h. Photographs. Attach current photographs of each comparable property to provide the reader with a clear understanding of the property. This requirement applies to both vacant and improved properties. Each photo as a minimum will be identified with the following information:

- 1) Project identification number,
- 2) Sale # or lease #,
- 3) Location (of comparable),
- 4) From (position photo taken from),
- 5) Date,
- 6) Town,
- 7) Grantor and grantee or lessor and lessee,
- 8) Looking (direction), and
- 9) Photo taken by.

- i. Sales Summary Chart. Attach a summary chart or recapitulation of the sales data.

- j. Sales Map. Include a suitable sales map (or maps) that show by sale numbers the location of each sale referenced and the location of the subject property/project location. The map(s) must also show the north arrow and must be clear enough to easily follow and locate the sales in the field.

- 9. Supporting Documentation and Exhibits. Attach any documentation or supporting data that may be pertinent to the report, including:

- a. Title Reports;
- b. Specialty Reports;
- c. Special instructions received from MaineDOT;

- d. Legal opinions or references;
- e. Cost-to-cure estimates and calculations;
- f. Cost data relied on to establish the contributory value of improvements acquired. Improvements must be valued as they contribute to the overall property value. Depreciated replacement costs may be an accepted measure of value if it is demonstrated that the market responds in that manner. The standard of valuation is the fair market value of the entire property. Totaling the independent money values of a property's separate parts is unacceptable;
- g. Reproduction costs of new buildings and improvements;
- h. Building Inspection Reports;
- i. Rental and cost data survey;
- j. Zoning ordinances and other land use regulations and maps;
- k. Copies of zoning change applications, maps, meeting minutes, rezoning decisions to demonstrate that rezoning is reasonably probable, if valuation is to be based on anticipated imminent and probable rezoning;
- l. Comprehensive planning documents and maps;
- m. Subdivision covenants, conditions and restrictions;
- n. Environmental or regulatory restrictions;
- o. Leases;
- p. Economic studies;
- q. Environmental studies or analyses performed. Discuss any hazmat on project properties or adjacent properties; recent cleanup on the project or adjacent properties or major cleanup in the neighborhood. Include information on pending actions that may impact the environmental standing of the subject parcel;
- r. Current dated right of way plans;
- s. Tax maps;
- t. Flood plain maps;
- u. Wetland maps;

- v. Utilities maps;
- w. Soils survey maps, soils descriptions and uses, particularly for agricultural use;
- x. Design reports and project descriptions (design plans should be retained until superseded or the project is closed out.); and
- y. Assessed values, real estate taxes, trends and assessment ratios.

See Chapter 4 for additional details.

9-3.03(d) Valuation and Appraisal Services

When obtaining valuation and appraisal services, the following will apply:

1. Short Format Appraisal Preparation. The Short Format Appraisal involves the preparation of formal documented Appraisal Reports in compliance with the Department's Short-Form Appraisal specifications. This form of appraisal is used in connection with uncomplicated acquisitions where adequate market data are available and there are no issues of special benefits or severance damages.
2. Before and After Appraisal Preparation. This involves the preparation of detailed Appraisal Reports of the before and after format in compliance with the Department's Appraisal Specifications.
3. Supplemental Appraisal Services. Supplemental appraisal services involve providing supplemental appraisal services in conformity with the above noted appraisal activities. These services may be required due to changes in project scope, change in ownership, discovery of unanticipated property impacts, and updating Appraisal Reports on unsettled acquisitions following eminent domain takings.
4. Dispute Resolution Counseling. These services involve working with the Department's Legal Services Division and others in preparation for State Claims Commission hearings or Superior Court proceedings.

Representative tasks may include participating in pre-hearing/trial conferences, preparing supplemental documentation to appraisal products, assisting in planning for the presentation of testimony and advising Department personnel on the valuation-related impacts of proposed settlement negotiations.

5. Expert Testimony. This involves representing the Department as an expert witness on matters of real property valuation in adjudicative proceedings.

See Chapter 4 for additional details.

9-3.03(e) Negotiation and Acquisition

Department Responsibilities

The Department will provide the Consultant with the following:

1. A copy of the project Estimate Sheet (Form VL-18) which summarizes the listing of recommended compensation levels, property owners and property rights required for the project;
2. Verification that necessary environmental and regulatory approvals are in place and that funding is available to support the acquisition(s);
3. A current set of design plans and cross sections, right of way plans and aerial photos, if available;
4. Copies of the project appraisals and valuation documents;
5. Owner Contact Report (Form AQ-14);
6. A Negotiator's Certificate, and Negotiator's Statement (Forms AQ-5 and AQ-6);
7. Copies of applicable Department approved forms:
 - a. Land owner offer letters, (Forms AQ-1 and AQ-2),
 - b. Land owner assent form (Form AQ-15),
 - c. Work permits (Form AQ-4),
 - d. Administrative Offer Settlement Agreement (Form AQ-8), and
 - e. Other documents as may be appropriate to the proposed acquisition(s).
8. Copies of the acquisition brochure, "A Landowners Guide to the Property Acquisition Process"; and
9. Limited authorization to negotiate administrative settlements.

Consultant Responsibilities

The Consultant will be responsible for:

1. Field Negotiations. The objective of the field negotiations phase is to personally meet with the owners, and establish a trusting professional relationship. The Consultant is responsible for insuring the owner is fully informed and understands:

- a. The purpose and need for the project;
- b. A general description of the overall project plans relating to typical sections drainage, traffic patterns, and schedule;
- c. The impact of the project on each property (e.g., takings, horizontal and vertical alignment changes, drainage, drive grade changes);
- d. The basis for the State's offer and the owner's rights and recourse if the offer is unacceptable;
- e. The schedule for acquisition, method of title transfer, who will be named as payees on the check, and the owners rights to cash the check without relinquishing appeal rights; and
- f. The name, address and telephone of the Department's project representative, should issues arise during the construction phase of the project.

The Consultant will meet these objectives in performing the following activities:

- a. Prepare the necessary paperwork before owner contacts.
- b. Highlight and annotating the plans to facilitate owner interpretation.
- c. Become familiar with valuation and appraisal materials.
- d. Make appointments for property owner contacts.
- e. Initiate mail and telephone contacts with non-resident property owners.
- f. Conduct personal contact and negotiations with affected property owners.
- g. Maintain a summary log of all property owner contacts (Form AQ-14). This will include:
 - 1) The Summary Log should contain a listing of the items discussed with the owner (e.g., takings, grade changes, trees to be removed).
 - 2) The summary should indicate issues or concerns of the owner and any commitments made by the Consultant to the owner.
 - 3) Detail should be sufficient to address issues that may arise as the project evolves.
- h. Transmitting to the Department all landowner construction accommodation requests for consideration.

- i. Conducting personal follow-up contacts in response to landowner concerns and/or requests.
 - j. To the extent that landowner agreement can be achieved, executing and witnessing appropriate settlement agreements, work permits, etc. Any administrative settlements above the approved offer require explanation and justification.
2. Acquisition Phase. At this phase of the acquisition process initial contacts have been completed, agreement reached where possible, and the process advances to the actual transfer of property rights. These rights will usually be transferred through the condemnation process using the power of eminent domain. The negotiator will have varied tasks at this point in the process. These include:
- a. The negotiator will complete and submit an updated status report; completed settlement agreements, contact reports, and project correspondence file, and submit them to the Department no later than 3 weeks before the condemnation date. This will serve as the basis to request final title verification, preparation of condemnation documents, compensation checks and landowner notification packets.
 - b. Following the filing of the Notice of Layout and Taking and the associated mailings to affected property owners, there is usually a number of land owner communications which will require the negotiator to conduct additional contacts, for the purpose of clarifying process, providing additional project information, and, if possible, negotiating an amicable settlement. The Consultant is responsible for a follow-up contact to all owners, in person, by telephone or letter at the Consultant's discretion, within 14 days of the condemnation date.
 - c. At, or about the "Condemnation Date" the development of the project is handed-off to the Project Resident. The Consultant will prepare and submit a report detailing elements such as negotiated construction accommodations, trees promised to be saved, assumptions regarding non-interference with septic systems, and other details, which will need to be communicated to those responsible for the construction of the project. A minimum telephone conversation with the Project Resident is required with an on-site meeting recommended.
 - d. By law, those acquisitions which are unsettled 60 days following the filing of the Condemnation Documents are referred to the State Claims Commission for the scheduling of a land damage hearing. During this 60-day period, it is expected that follow-up contacts will be made with the owner of each unsettled acquisition with the objective of resolving differences and gaining settlements.

- e. At, or slightly before the expiration of the 60-day referral period the Consultant is required to make a final contact with each owner for a project status update and provide the property owner with a name and number of the Department's representative. The Consultant will submit to the Department a final status report detailing the status and details of each acquisition.
- f. At the completion of the 60-day negotiations period, the consultant will turn over all files to the Department.

See Chapter 5 for additional details.

9-3.03(f) Relocation Field Services

From the earliest stages of the project development process, the relocation-related activities involve a varied group of tasks, examples of which include the following:

1. Perform all work in compliance with appropriate FHWA and MaineDOT guidelines.
2. Prepare appropriate Conceptual Stage Relocation Plans for Environmental Impact Statements or Environmental Assessments on larger projects, as necessary.
3. Inventory project corridors to assess potential project impacts that would require commercial sign relocations and residential and commercial dislocations.
4. Prepare detailed estimates of relocation costs and time requirements for the purpose of establishing project budgets and schedules.
5. Contact possible displacees prior to public hearings to avoid surprises and confusion at public hearings. Discuss the acquisition/relocation process and give them an overview of how the relocation assistance program works.
6. Coordinate with the Relocation Casework Provider in cases where it appears that there may be hardship issues involved, and assist the displacee(s) in requesting early acquisition procedures.
7. Attend public hearings to answer questions regarding relocation.
8. Coordinate with the valuation/acquisition functions to ascertain the probable magnitude of acquisition offers for the purpose of initiating a preliminary computation of eligibility for, and amount of, replacement housing allowances.
9. Work with local brokers, the Internet, newspapers and other sources to compile an inventory of available replacement housing, replacement rentals or business locations.

10. Develop documentation based on the most comparable available replacement properties in the computation of replacement housing allowances, replacement rental allowances, moving costs, reestablishment expenses or “in lieu of” payments.
11. Establish and maintain a file of all contacts and work products to document every phase of the development of the project.

9-3.03(g) Relocation Casework Services

Relocation services involving direct assistance to individuals or businesses normally come to an active phase at, or shortly before, commencement of acquisition negotiations. The acquisition and relocation assistance activities may or may not be conducted by the same person. The tasks associated with providing assistance are extremely variable, and may include, but not be limited to, the following:

1. Perform all work in compliance with appropriate FHWA and MaineDOT guidelines.
2. Coordinate with management, design, mapping, appraisal and displacees(s) for early acquisitions.
3. Help displacees prepare hardship letters requesting early acquisition.
4. Have paperwork (background information and applications for payments) prepared and ready for signatures, if practical.
5. Prepare and send “Notice of Intent to Acquire” as necessary.
6. Compute, request and deliver replacement housing allowances, replacement rental allowances or business relocation payments to owner(s), or tenant(s).
7. Develop documentation (bids, schedules, negotiated) for, and compute payments for, moving costs, incidental (closing costs) payments, mortgage buy-down, reestablishment expenses and “in lieu of” payments.
8. Assist affected abutters in coordinating the removal and/or re-installation of commercial signs outside the limits of newly acquired right of way and obtain necessary documentation for, and coordinate the payments for, all eligible reimbursable costs.
9. Prepare necessary documentation and prepare required applications, etc. for owner/tenant signatures.
10. Work with low-income tenants to establish income levels and ability to pay for housing within Federal Regulation guidelines.

11. Monitor moves, set up and attend closings, and inspect replacement housing for DSS standards.
12. Maintain contact reports and files for each relocation case history.
See Chapter 6 for additional details.